

Section 4.0 Research Questions

The Nantucket Health & Human Services Needs Assessment Study research addresses three fundamental questions:

1. *What Are the Human Needs?*
2. *How Serious Are The Human Needs?*
3. *Who Are The Needy?*

What Are The Human Needs? Human services encompass an extremely broad range of categories, ranging from public services like education, healthcare, mass transit, public and affordable housing, public safety, and financial assistance (Medicaid, Food Stamps, TAFDC), just to name a few. Human services are not simple “welfare” and other forms of public assistance. Human services touch all citizens in one way or another and to a greater or lesser degree depending upon our lifestyle, personal resources, our age, our level of health or disability, and degree of need. Individual need for human services varies from person to person and changes as we go through life. Human services are a part of everyone’s life.

How Serious Are The Human Needs? We are fortunate in that most of our human needs are well taken care of here on Nantucket. Nantucket Island is home to some of the finest medical practitioners and healthcare facilities; myriad services for senior and elder citizens through the Council on Aging Saltmarsh Center are legendary. Specialized help in the areas of mental health, alcoholism and drug abuse counseling are available within the Cape and Islands region. But, as with any system of services, there is always room for improvement. Populations grow and diversify, age distributions change, children are born, families move on and off the Island the bottom line, needs do change.

Who Are The Needy? We are all needy to some degree. Fortunately for most of us, our needs are mostly met through our own resources (education, work, income, personal and family strengths and resources). Unfortunately, some individuals’ personal strengths and resources are limited or tragedies may befall them, and from time to time they are unable to completely provide for all of their individual and family needs. It is important on an on-going basis to identify those among us who are in serious need of our community resources and support services. The priority in services must be to provide for the most needy among us.

This **Report of Findings Report – 2006** presents the highlights from studies aimed at answering these three key questions.

